

Amendments to the Claims:

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- 1 1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for establishing a structure of a
 2 data item within a computer system, where said data item is an instance of a first class
 3 and inherits attributes and methods from said first class, the method comprising the
 4 steps of:
 5 creating a category object that is an instance of a category class, wherein said category
 6 class has one or more attributes; and
 7 associating said data item with said category object without associating said category
 8 object with all other instances of said first class thereby causing said data item
 9 to be associated with a structure that includes storage for values for said one or
 10 more attributes of said category class.

 - 1 2. (original) The method for Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented
 2 steps of:
 3 receiving data that is designated for a particular attribute of said one or more
 4 attributes;
 5 determining whether said data conforms to rules associated with said particular
 6 attribute; and
 7 if said data conforms to said rules
 8 storing said data as a value into said particular attribute.

 - 1 3. (currently amended) The method for Claim 2 wherein the steps of receiving,
 2 determining, and storing are performed by a method in said category class.